

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 8357

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ALIANZA POPULAR FIGURE ON AP APPROACH TO REFORM BILL, OTHER
POLITICAL MATTERS

REF: MADRID 8215

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS, SALVADOR SERRATS, ANEPA
(ALIANZA POPULAR, COMPONENT) VICE PRESIDENT AND CORTES MEMBER,
DEFENDED AP'S APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT SPONSORED REFORM PROJECT
AS ESSENTIALLY POSITIVE. (SEPTEL IN PREPARATION ON CORTES
PREDEDURES AND PROSPECTS.) AS PREVIOUSLY TOLD US BY OTHER AP
FIGURES (E.G. REF), PRINCIPAL CONCERN CENTERS ON ISSUE OF
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MAJORITY VS. PROPORTIONAL ELECTION SYSTEM FOR LOWER HOUSE. SERRATS ARGUED THAT SPAIN'S LACK OF DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT SITUATION OF GRAVE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE TO SPAIN AND REST OF WORLD MEANT THAT GOVT MUST BE STRONG SIMPLY TO BE ABLE TO GOVERN, AND THAT EVEN OTHER COUNTRIES (BY IMPLICATION WITH GREATER DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE) SUCH AS FRANCE HAD SHOWN IN PRACTICE THAT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (HE DISMISSED THE GERMAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM ON GROUNDS THAT SPANISH ARE NOT GERMANS) AND ITS CONSEQUENT FRAGMENTING OF POWER WITHIN PARLIAMENT LED TO HAMSTRUNG GOVERNMENTS. HE ALSO SAID BLUNTLY THAT MAJORITY VS PROPORTIONAL ISSUE AS CURRENTLY POSED IN SPAIN WAS DIRECT RESULT OF SIMILAR ANALYSIS ON RIGHT AND LEFT REGARDING WHICH SIDE WAS MORE LIKELY TO PREVAIL IN SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICT SYSTEM (HE PREFERRED RUN OFF FEATURE).

3. SERRATS REITERATED ALIANZA DESIRE TO ELIMINATE FROM REFORM BILL ITS ADDRESS TO ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND INSTEAD HAVE CURRENT CORTES (I.E. CONSERVATIVE) PASS SEPARATELY ON ELECTORAL LAW. AND TO OBTAIN FINAL VOTE ON REFORM BILL ON ITEM BY ITEM BASIS RATHER THAN IN TOTO, DECISION THAT WAS GOVT'S TO MAKE. SERRATS IMPLIED THAT AP HAD ALREADY THREATENED TO VOTE AGAINST BILL IF THWARTED ON THIS POINT. (COMMENT: SINCE AT NO OTHER TIME WAS BASIC AP SUPPORT FOR BILL EVEN VAGUELY CALLED INTO QUESTION AND SINCE OTHER AP FIGURES HAVE INDICATED THAT IN FINAL CRUNCH AP WILL NOT VOTE AGAINST EVEN IMPERFECT BILL, WE TAKE THIS. TO BE AP NEGOTIATING TACTIC.

4. SERRATS PRESENTATION CONFIRMED THAT AP GOVT PACT ON REFORM BILL IS STILL GOAL RATHER THAN REALITY. CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS IN FACT INVOLVE VARIOUS POLITICAL AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUPINGS, HE SAID, AND HE WAS USING HIS STATUS AS DEPUTY UNRELATED TO HIS POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS TO PLAY MEDIATING HONEST BROKER ROLE. (IN FACT HE SAID HE HAD MET WITH THE KING THAT SAME MORNING.) AS AN EXAMPLE HE MENTIONED HIS IDEA OF A COMPROMISE THREE FIFTHS RULE TO RESOLVE ISSUE OVER WHETHER CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE COULD BE ACHIEVED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE OR SOME HIGHER MAJORITY (ALIANZA HAS CALLED FOR TWO THIRDS RULE WHICH RAISES FEARS IN GOS AND IN DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION THAT CONSERVATIVES COULD BLOCK NEEDED FURTHER CONSTITUTION REFORM). HE NOTED THAT BARE MAJORITY RULE

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COULD ALSO RESULT IN REGRESSIVE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND THOUGH 60 PER CENT WAS ADEQUATE PROTECTION BUT HARDLY EXCESSIVE BARRIER.

5. HE ALSO CLAIMED AUTHORSHIP OF IDEA TO GIVE CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SYNDICATES AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

WHO WOULD PREPARE NON BINDING REPORTS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INITIATIVES AND ENJOY ALL PARLIAMENTARY PERKS EXCEPT IMMUNITY THAT IS BUYING OFF CURRENT SYNDICAL CORTES MEMBERS. ALSO COUNCIL'S FALAVOR OF ORGANIC REPRESENTATION WOULD (DESPITE ITS POWERLESSNESS) APPEAL TO AT LEAST SOME FALANGISTS.

6. SERRQTS WAS LESS FORTHCOMING REGARDING NEED TO WORK FOR BILL, THAT WOULD ACCOMMODATE IDEAS OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION. ACKNOWLEDGING DESIRABILITY OF CONSENSUS ON THE SYSTEM AND ADMITTING THAT NOT EVERY MEMBER OF AP SHARED HIS DESIRE TO SEE FORMATION OF OTHER, COMPETING ALLIANCES, SERRATS NEVERTHELESS TOOK LINE THAT DECISION BY ANYONE NOT TO PLAY IS HIS OWN PROBLEM.
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